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5. The Legend of the Holy Grail. By Professor George M. Harper, of Princeton College, N. J.

Professor F. M. Warren :

The discussion of a paper like this is practically impossible, for the reason that so much ground is covered and the writer has limited himself to summing up the theories in regard to the legend. In order to discuss it with any degree of seriousness, we are obliged to attack some one of the theories, which would throw the field open to general discussion.

When we consider the difficulties that surround the subject we will see how impossible it will be to gain much in a short discussion. We know that especially those who are interested on the German side of the subject—such men as Foerster and Zimmer, deny in toto the conclusions Professor Harper has given us to-day, seeing nothing Celtic whatever in the story of the Grail.

I therefore call attention to one or two points. I think we are obliged to rely on the first man who wrote on the subject, and what we do not get from him, we simply surmise. In my opinion, he wrote the story of the Grail not far from the time when he wrote his other stories. They were written between 1160 and 1180. In regard to Robert de Boron, the general theory in regard to his version of the Christian Legend of the Grail has been discussed at length by Gaston Paris in a Preface to his *Merlin* in the Early French Text Society series.

In regard to the poet himself, if we read his poems he is found to be a man of no invention whatever; he versified; a court versifier of stories which came to his eye and ear,—I should judge they came merely to his ear. There is a story known to all of us—the story of Iwain, in which he made serious gaps, showing that he does not understand the matter and that you cannot rely on him.

What Prof. Harper says relates to Chrestien's poem. The Knight of the Grail, or the Knight as we may call him, arrives at a castle hidden from sight; enters and is entertained by the knight of the castle; he sees carried through the halls the lance with a drop of blood, but refrains from asking questions; soon after comes through the dish which gives out the light; next morning he cannot find any one of whom he can ask a question—he has been warned not to ask any questions; the castle disappears and he sets out on a pilgrimage.

In my mind there is no doubt, judging from other poems of Chrestien de Troies, that he got the story of the talismans and the other story at the same time, and that he did not put these two stories together, and that the whole thing came from one source; what it was we do not know. I wish to emphasize the fact that we have got to come back to Chrestien.

The indefiniteness of the story would show that the legend had not been developed.

Another point is in regard to Walter Map. There is no proof that he had anything to do with the story of the Grail; there is no proof that he wrote any such style of literature. The sooner we get rid of such names as Walter Map, who have definite dates and did definite things, I think we simplify the problem. I would criticise the paper in that Prof. Harper has brought in a man who is proved not to have had anything to do with the story of the Grail. I think in such a paper it is well to lay aside such points.

Professor J. E. Matzke :

I wish to make a remark on the conclusions which Professor Harper draws from the mention of Kiot of Provins by Wolfram von Eschenbach. When endeavoring to burden Provencal literature with the name of a writer of whom not even a trace has been found, it will be necessary to base his existence upon more convincing evidence than the statement that Wolfram is a serious writer and would not mention sources which he had not seen. As a matter of fact, Wolfram merely follows the custom of the time in giving an authority for his story; and I would rather take it for granted that Kiot did not exist, just because Wolfram cites him.

Professor G. M. Harper :

I think it quite likely that the statement can be proved that Kiot never existed, but some one did exist whom he chose to call Kiot and who gave him material not found in any other of his authorities—material which he did not understand himself; hence he did not merely invent; he used material which he did not comprehend and which we do not find in any of his predecessors; he says he got it from a man named Kiot. He got it from some one; whether this person was properly called Kiot, or not, is a matter of much less importance.

From a careful reading of Wolfram von Eschenbach, I have come to the conclusion that his statements, when not intentionally funny, are, as a general thing, trustworthy; except, of course, where they flagrantly fly in the face of historical truth, as they generally do in the first two books. But when he gets down to his subject, it has been my experience that where he does not indulge his peculiar kind of humor, and where he speaks of himself and relates his history of the poem, he is as trustworthy as an author of that age and writing that kind of work can be.

#### EVENING SESSION.

The Association reassembled at 8 o'clock. Professor H. C. G. Brandt occupied the chair and introduced the speaker of the evening, Professor Francis A. March, President of the Association, who delivered an address on